



**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Policy No.: DOC 5.4.3	Subject: <b>OFFENDER ACCESS TO TELEPHONES</b>
Chapter 5: OFFENDER PROGRAMS	Page 1 of 4 + one attachment
Section 4: Mail, Telephones, and Visiting	Revision Date: December 20, 2001
Signature: /s/ Bill Slaughter	Effective Date: April 1, 1998

**I. POLICY:**

It is the policy of the Department of Corrections to permit reasonable offender access to telephones. The use of telephones by offenders is a privilege, not a right. Offenders may communicate with persons or organizations subject to the limitations necessary to maintain the facility's order and security.

**II. AUTHORITY:**

53-1-203, MCA. Powers and Duties of Department of Corrections

**III. DEFINITIONS:**

None.

**IV. PROCEDURES:**

A. General

1. Telephone access for offenders will be through phones usually located in each housing unit.
2. Phone calls made at State expense on the state telephone system will be at the discretion of the facility/program administrator, directed by policy and procedures adopted at the facility/program, and will be an exception to routine based on special circumstance.

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3. The Warden/Superintendent/Program Manager will ensure that a schedule of availability is established so that each offender has an opportunity for access consistent with the offender's custody level. The system employed should permit local and long-distance calls to allow contact with family and friends.
  
4. The following calls are prohibited:
  - three way or conference calls;
  - call forwarding; and
  - calls to 800 and 900 numbers.

MCE may allow exceptions to the 800 number prohibition, provided it is work related.
  
5. Local procedures will specify what action will be taken when complaints are received about abusive or unwanted telephone contact by the public from identified offenders. As technology permits, telephone numbers may be blocked, in accordance with [Attachment A](#).
  
6. Each facility should have the capability to shut of all offender phones and will have procedures for doing so during emergencies or power failures.
  
7. The use of pre-paid phone cards by offenders may be authorized in facilities. The phone system must have the ability to record and/or block calls to select numbers.
  
8. Local procedures will specify measures to prevent abuse of the phone card, use by unauthorized offenders, and will include limitations for the possession of phone cards.

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9. Any system used for offender phone calls must have a voice prompt that indicates the call is coming from a correctional facility to allow the end user the option to accept or reject the call.

**B. Monitoring, Recording and Blocking Telephone**

1. All offender calls, whether they are collect calls or made by a pre-paid phone card, must have the ability to be recorded and monitored. All calls that are monitored or taped must have notice to that effect posted adjacent to the phone, as well as a verbal announcement during the call that it is recorded.
2. Offenders will have no expectation of privacy while placing general telephone calls.
3. Victims may request that an offender not be allowed to telephone them by filling out Attachment A, Request to Block Telephone Contact by an Offender.

**C. Legal Calls**

If legal telephone calls are allowed they will be private, and not be monitored or taped.

**D. Verified Emergency Calls**

In a verified emergency, staff may arrange for an offender to receive an incoming phone call. Calls in this category will involve a serious family illness, death, or impending disaster related to the offender's family or property. If an emergency phone call is made to the offender, the name and phone number of the caller will be taken and the offender permitted to call that person in accordance with facility/program policy. Emergency phone calls will not be counted against any established limits on regularly scheduled calls.

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E. Locked Units

Offenders in locked or special housing status may be eligible for telephone calls on a limited basis.

Offenders in disciplinary detention will only be permitted emergency and attorney phone calls in accordance with facility/program policy.

**V. CLOSING:**

Questions concerning this policy should be directed to the employee's immediate supervisor.



STATE OF MONTANA  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

**REQUEST FORM TO BLOCK TELEPHONE CONTACT BY AN  
OFFENDER**

The Department of Corrections respects citizens' wishes not to be contacted by offenders. The Department has the ability, in most circumstances, to block telephone calls made to your number by offenders. If you wish to have your phone number(s) blocked from offender calls, please fill out and return this form to the Department of Corrections Public Information Officer. In all cases, calls received from offenders will have a prompt that will empower you to accept or reject the call.

I \_\_\_\_\_, wish to have the following telephone numbers blocked.

**COMPLETE TELEPHONE NUMBER, INCLUDING AREA CODE (please list each number on a separate line) that you want to be blocked:**

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
(print name and mailing address)

**PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THIS FORM AND RETURN THE ORIGINAL TO THE DEPARTMENT PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER**, for forwarding to the appropriate facility. The Department's mailing address is PO Box 201301, Helena, MT 59620-1301. This form will be attached to the Offender's Correspondence/Visitation List to ensure the appropriate transfer of the information with the offender's location.